



Professional Learning Community

Reflection Tool

(quarterly)

Purposes and Uses of the PLC Reflection Tool

This reflection tool should be used in conjunction with the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Observation Guide. Consider using this extended version of the reflection tool periodically (two-three times per year) to build and deepen a **shared understanding** of what it means to work as a PLC and to provide a meaningful tool for **self-monitoring** a PLC's development. This reflection tool will be most powerful when completed individually by PLC members and then used by the team as the basis for a reflective dialogue about your PLC's.

Elements of Professional Learning Community

This reflection tool is structured around the elements of an effective professional learning community presented below.

Shared Vision and Ways of Working

Professional learning communities focus on student learning as the end and teaching as the means. Developing consciousness about norms and values is central to the community-building process. When shared norms of collaboration are attended to over time, it will produce skilled communication and increased clarity and cohesion within working groups (Garmston & Wellman, 1999).

Collaboration

Collaboration refers to sharing expertise and perspectives on teaching and learning processes, examining data about students, and developing a sense of mutual support and shared responsibility for effective instruction. Developing collaborative cultures is the work of leaders who realize that a collection of superstar teachers working in isolation cannot produce the same results as interdependent colleagues who share and develop professional practices together (Garmston & Wellman, 1999).

Reflective Dialogue

Reflective dialogue helps develop shared understandings of such things as the purposes of and processes for learning. Shared understandings bind communities together and bind members to shared goals and shared work. Through reflective dialogue, group members gain perspective on who and how they are to each other and to those they serve. Reflective dialogue is the catalyst for reflective practice. It helps participants develop self-awareness and collective awareness of personal and shared work (Garmston & Wellman, 1999).

Completion Date: _____

Team Member: _____

Shared Vision and Ways of Working

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Rating of Key Indicators	Not at all				To a great extent
1. The focus of the group's activities is on students' understanding of science content in order to improve student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The team has standards or criteria that specify what determines proficiency in student work.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Team members share ideas based on evidence, and discussions of the pros and cons of ideas are grounded in evidence.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The group plans for or pursues opportunities to enhance their content knowledge when needed.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Actions are planned and modified based on available research.	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis Rating The group has a common vision and applies standards as criteria in its actions, reflections, and planning.	1	2	3	4	5

Supporting Evidence for Ratings:

Provide a brief description of the nature and quality of this component of the observation, the rationale for your synthesis rating, and evidence to support that rating. If available, include examples/quotes to illustrate your ratings.

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Rating of Key Indicators	Not at all				To a great extent
1. Members value the contributions of other members of the group and are open to different points of view.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Criticism is constructive and there is a collegial challenging of diverse ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Responsibilities are shared amongst all members of the group.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The group is good at managing their time. The meeting is efficient and effective.	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis Rating The group creates an environment that fosters open communication and sharing of ideas. All members have the opportunity to learn from one another and support the group's continuous improvement. The group is organized and managed to achieve its goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Supporting Evidence for Ratings:

Provide a brief description of the nature and quality of this component of the observation, the rationale for your synthesis rating, and evidence to support that rating. If available, include examples/quotes to illustrate your ratings.

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Rating of Key Indicators	Not at all				To a great extent
1. The group monitors its understanding of information that informs its activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The group monitors its progress and adjusts its processes to become more effective when appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The group considers several ways of doing something before deciding what might work best.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Connections are made between past learning, current goals, and intended applications.	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesis Rating: The group monitors its actions, decisions, and reflections based on its common norms and goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Supporting Evidence for Ratings:

Provide a brief description of the nature and quality of this component of the observation, the rationale for your synthesis rating, and evidence to support that rating. If available, include examples/quotes to illustrate your ratings.

Supportive vs Developmental Practices

Stevens and Kahne identify types of practice that Professional Learning Communities generally gravitate towards: supportive and developmental. While both practices are collaborative in nature, supportive practices tend to occur in response to immediate and pressing concerns, primarily leading to short-term exchanges with little follow-up. Developmental practices are proactive attempts to address systemic concerns within long-term projects involving sustained and regular activities. Typically, teachers help each other by using one of the two types of collaborative practice and both practices can be useful. However, only developmental practices lead to lasting, systemic change.

Supportive vs Developmental Practices		
Below each practice, place an X on the continuum of practice line to indicate the balance between supportive and developmental practices in your PLC.		
<p>Example:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> Totally supportive Totally developmental </div>		
Dimensions	Supportive Practices	Developmental Practices
Focus	Supporting routine tasks (i.e., sharing information about students or new ideas for classroom activities)	Improving instructional capacity (i.e., developing standards-based curricula or new interdisciplinary curricular units)
Continuum of practice	<div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> Totally supportive Totally developmental </div>	
Prompts	Reactive (responding to immediate, pressing concerns)	Proactive (addressing systemic, general concerns)
Continuum of practice	<div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> Totally supportive Totally developmental </div>	
Time Frame	Short-term solutions	Long-term solutions
Continuum of practice	<div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> Totally supportive Totally developmental </div>	
Type of information exchanged	Disconnected pieces of information about individual problems (spontaneous advice)	Connected sets of information about common problems (deliberate follow up and monitoring)
Continuum of practice	<div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> Totally supportive Totally developmental </div>	
Source: W.D. Stevens, with J. Kahne, "Professional Communities and Instructional Practices"		

What does these ratings suggest to you about the balance of practice in your PLC's work?